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Ruskin belongs to the sensational school. He lauds Dante's "intense definition;" and he quotes largely from the arbitrary imagination of the Hebrew poets and prophets. Like the multitude of every age, he is awed by the coarse phenomena of nature, the turbulence of the sea, huge mountains and crags, confused masses of clouds, strong contrasts of light and shadow; in short, forms and combinations of the natural world that symbolize the grandeur and disorder of chaos, rather than the unity and harmony of a perfect creation. Repose is hateful to Ruskin, except the repose of decay and death; he revels in toil, suffering, and picturesque degradation.

Ruskin shows his feeling in what are called his best things, in grand and gloomy word-pictures, as glowing and effective as the paintings by Turner, which he lauds so highly. They are the material expression of his feeling and it is not surprising that he should exalt Turner's genius and build up on his works a system of Beauty that illustrates a foregone conclusion in his own mind. It is furthermore a natural consequence for minds of this class to prize details. Details are more perceptible in chaotic aspects of nature than in quiet ones. This is why he insists upon a study of details as leading to the highest ends of art. All very well as an honest opinion, provided such an opinion be not accompanied with contemptuous judgment of those who minister to another and a higher phase of beauty, and who are not conspicuous for "intense definition" in art. Ruskin seems to be insensible to this higher phase of Beauty, and to the works of artists who best express it. He has no idea of that singleness of purpose which leads an artist to concentrate his soul upon the subtlest traits of Beauty that nature affords. It is impossible for one constituted like Ruskin to see in a single gleam of emotion a ray of heavenly light, to contemplate the ineffable charm of scenery, or of human character, when details disappear behind a veil of loveliness the texture of which is not visible to one who demands some coarse sign with which to support his blind faith. Mr. Ruskin, judged of by his works, is as insensible to beauty of this order, as a *sans culottes* to the spirit of liberty or a Puritan to the gentle and exalted influence of charity. If he could feel its presence in art he would not award persistent admiration to art, and seek to excuse the shortcomings of artists and schools of art in this line, not conspicuous for it.

Simple illustrations of what we have said are apparent on almost any page of *Modern Painters*—we select two at random. The first relates to Raphael and Claude, whom Ruskin substantially regards as unduly revered by the world. Speaking of one of Raphael's works, he says that much of the *dignity* in one of his later pictures depends on such portions as the *green light of the lake and sky behind the rocks* in the St. John of the Tribune," and that "the repainted distortion of the Madonna dell'Impanata, is redeemed with something like *elevated character* merely by the *light of the linen window* from which it takes its name" (vol. ii. p. 41). Now this on Claude (vol. v. p. 249-51) "He had serenity of purpose but . . . neither earnestness, humility nor love . . . There is no other sentiment traceable in his work than this weak dislike to entertain the conception of toil or suffering." In another place, in the chapter called "Wings of the Lion," which treats of Venetian art, Mr. Ruskin says, "In all its roots of power and modes of work; in its belief, its breadth and its judgment, I find the Venetian mind perfect;" and yet ten lines further on, in spite of *belief* and *judgment*, he says, "No Venetian painter ever worked with any aim beyond that of delighting the eye, or ex-

pressing fancies agreeable to himself or flattering to his nation." He illustrates this subject by stating that "the Assumption is a noble picture, because Titian (the 'central type' of the Venetian mind) believed in the Madonna. But he did not paint it to make any one else believe in her. He painted it because he *enjoyed rich masses of red and blue and faces flushed with sunlight*." How Mr. Ruskin can make this view of Titian's motives accord with the *belief, breadth and judgment* of a *perfect* mind the perfection of which he only realizes through the "grandest, most labored, and most beloved" works of Venetian sacred art, and of which the Assumption is one—puzzles us. A previous assertion that "the religion of Titian is like that of Shakspeare—occult behind his magnificent equity," does not help him through the inconsistency.

Mr. Ruskin ought to reflect that artists are not independent of their age, and that they are if not consciously, at least unconsciously the recording angels of it. It is their business to chronicle the feeling of their time as reflected through their own; they are compelled to embody feeling in familiar forms by material and spiritual influences over which they have but little control, even if disposed to exercise it. Raphael, if left to himself, never would have painted the ugly but devout face of a patron in the Madonna di Foligno, nor Claude perhaps introduced figures and architecture in his landscapes forced upon him by the Renaissance spirit of his time. Mr. Ruskin ought to view Claude as an artist who illustrates an immense advance in the landscape art of the world, and generously admit that Claude's art was rather due to "earnestness, humility and love," as was actually the case, than charge upon it far-fetched motives that are ludicrous to those whose judgment is as good as Mr. Ruskin's.

In summing up Mr. Ruskin's claim to the respect of lovers of art and nature, we repeat that it must be based on his scientific observation, his descriptive power and suggestive passages, free from coarse theories and principles arising from a somewhat morbid organism. His analyses of moral and social matters must be taken for what they are worth; they are entertaining episodes, whatever value they possess in connection with art. His criticisms on works of art, and his graduation of artists, ancient and modern, is wholly arbitrary, and in no wise to be relied on.

One feature of all his works that deserves unqualified praise in its place is the beauty of the engraved illustrations. They are indispensable to the text, and any text without them is comparatively worthless.

STUDIES OF ANIMAL LIFE. By George Henry Lewes. Harper & Brothers.

An unpretending little book, containing a great deal of useful and curious information on animal life. Well printed, profusely illustrated, and a good book to place in the hands of the young.

THE SUNNY SOUTH; OR, THE SOUTHERNER AT HOME. Edited by Prof. J. H. Ingraham. G. G. Evans, Philadelphia.

A series of well written, interesting, impartial, and useful letters, detailing the five years' experience of a governess at the South. Every detail of plantation life is minutely described, showing that the writer has been a close observer of the workings of the peculiar institution, and its effect upon both white and black. Her deductions, however, are not always as clearly stated as we could wish. As a true reflex of Southern life, it has claims to high consideration.